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No. 30

A SERMON

PREACHED IN

ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH,

PHILADELPHIA,

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 8, 1876.

ON OCCASION OF THE ORDINATION OF

HENRY WINTER SYLE, M. A.,
(A DEAF MUTE,)

AS

DEACON

IN THE

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH,

BY THE

RT. REV. WM. BACON STEVENS, D.D., LL.D.,
BISHOP OF PENNSYLVANIA.

PHILADELPHIA:

McCALLA & STAVELY, PRINTERS, 237-9 DOCK STREET
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AND OF THE
BISHOPS AND CLERGY PRESENT AT THE ORDINATION.

SERMON.

“ He hath done all things well: He maketh both the Deaf to hear, and the Dumb to speak.”—*Mark vii. 37.*

There is something peculiarly interesting and impressive in the services of this morning.

For the first time in the History of the Christian Church, authority will be given this day to a Deaf and Dumb man to preach the everlasting Gospel, to stand in God’s house and Minister in God’s name. But it may be asked, how can this be done? How can a Deaf and Dumb man preach? Why has one of this class never been ordained before? Why do we ordain this person now?

To answer these questions briefly, and thus show how, not in a miraculous way indeed, but by the advances of science and benevolence, the words of our blessed Lord come true. “ He maketh both the Deaf to hear and the Dumb to speak,” will be the aim of this discourse.

To the honor of Christianity be it said, that to its influence we owe all that has been done for the instruction, moral and intellectual, of the Deaf and Dumb.

Amidst the highest civilization of ancient days we

find no effort in behalf of this afflicted class, as they were regarded as incapable of instruction.

Among the Greeks the same word which signifies bluntness of intellect, or mental dullness, also signifies speechlessness and deafness, and so in the New Testament the same word is rendered both Deaf and Dumb.

When the Blessed Lord came, the Deaf and Dumb claimed and received His Divine care. Numerous were the miracles of healing wrought on these sad children of sorrow, showing His ready sympathy for their suffering, followed by prompt relief of their defective organs of speech and hearing. The example of the Master taught His disciples their first lesson of compassion for this class, and though His followers were slow to learn it, yet this slowness was the result not so much of the lack of love for their souls, as for apparent inability to reach their brain and heart.

Regarded by the Code of Justinian as but one remove from imbeciles, not allowed to make wills, execute deeds of gift, or other legal instruments; and disfranchised by the disabilities under which they labored in nearly every nation in Europe; we do not wonder that the Church followed too much the opinion of the Roman law, and the older European codes, based as Molinæus says, on the principle, *surdus natus est mutus et plane indisciplinibilis*, when it also gave but little credit to their ability to receive, or believe, the truth as it is in Jesus. Even St. Augustine remarks that "deafness from birth makes it impossible

for such a one to have faith, since he who is Deaf can neither hear the word or learn to read it," and though he admits that the "hearing" whereby faith cometh (Rom. x. 17), refers to mental understanding and acceptance into the heart, and not to the mere physical sense of hearing, for he speaks of *reading* as a means whereby the Deaf may receive faith, yet in his time, no Deaf and Dumb person had ever learned to read. It was not until the middle of the Sixteenth Century that Pedro Ponce de Leon, a Benedictine Monk, who lived in Spain between the years 1520-1584, first succeeded in imparting instruction to the Deaf and Dumb. The cases which he mentions are some of them, quite striking, though great allowance has to be made in reading accounts written in times, when efforts of this sort were regarded not only as marvels, but as miracles, and were magnified by the historians of them, in order to make deeper impressions and secure greater glory. Hence, when Ponce de Leon, or rather the Abbé Carton, of Bruges, who two hundred and fifty years after, upon the alleged discovery by him of a MS. account of Ponce's works, writes a history of his doings, and says that among Ponce's pupils was "one who received the order of Priesthood and possessed a benefice, and performed the duties of his office in reciting the Breviary," we must remember that such an extraordinary statement needs proper verification, and has to be accepted with large abatements. In the light of efforts made for the instruction of the Deaf and Dumb, within

the last hundred years, we cannot accept the statement that Ponce taught a congenital Deaf Mute, so to speak, as "to recite the Breviary" and perform Mass. The person had perhaps only some very serious impediment in his speech, like that, for example, which the Spanish Deacon and martyr St. Vincent had, which disabled him from speaking, but which was only imperfect articulation, and not full deafness and dumbness, and which the patience and persevering toil of Ponce de Leon taught him partially to overcome. But if the statement is true, it proves that the man had a *voice* and spoke *audible* words, and hence he cannot come under the denomination of a man both Deaf and Dumb at his ordination.

In the case of St. Vincent just referred to, who was martyred in Spain during the Diocletian persecution, A. D. 303, "he was," says Wheatly, "instructed in divinity by Valerius, Bishop of Saragossa; but by reason of an impediment in his speech never took upon him the office of preaching." As it was about this time the inferior orders of the Church were gradually introduced, it is more than probable that this martyr was but a sub-Deacon or door-keeper, who was charged with various inferior offices which had been previously discharged by Deacons; and in consequence of this, was inaccurately, in that confused age, called a Deacon. Be this as it may, in both these cases, the "officiating" seems to have depended on the ability to use the *voice*; as indeed was proper, when the congregations to be ministered to were composed of *hearing* persons.

The effort of Ponce was mentioned by Franciscus Vallesius, a Spanish Physician, who published his "*Philosophia Sacra*" in 1590, and who was a friend, as he tells us, of Ponce or Petrus Pontius, as he calls him. This was followed up by Juan Pablo Bonet, who published, in 1620, the first treatise ever printed on the education of the Deaf and Dumb. The efforts in Spain, were however, soon given up; and so it comes to pass, that Spain, the country where the first successful instruction of Deaf Mutes was begun, is now behind all nominally Christian lands in its provisions for this class. In the latter part of the Sixteenth Century, Rodolphus Agricola, in his work entitled "*De Inventione Dialectica*," instances as an illustration of the immense and almost incredible power of the human mind, and as little less than miraculous, what he had witnessed, "a person Deaf and Dumb who had learned to understand writing, and as if possessed of speech was able to write down his whole thoughts." This has been stated to be the earliest published testimony as to the capacity of Deaf Mutes to receive instruction in that way.

But the honor of first educating this class in the general principles of grammar, and in primarily associating thoughts with written, instead of spoken symbols, is generally ascribed to the Abbé de l'Epée, in France, in the Eighteenth Century; though Dugald Stewart says that George Dalgarno, of Aberdeen, had long before been "led by his own sagacity to adopt *a priori* the same general conclusions."

In 1760 schools were opened simultaneously, in Paris, Edinburgh and Dresden, for Mutes, but no institution was established by the government until that founded in Leipsic by Samuel Heincke, in 1779, where the poor as well as others could be received and educated. The first in England was founded in London in 1792, only eighty-four years ago.

It is not necessary, however, in this discourse, to go into the history of various schemes for educating Deaf Mutes in foreign lands; but it is important to state just here, and on this occasion, some interesting facts concerning the establishment in this country of that important work, as it is an illustration of the old prophecy, "A little child shall lead them." Dr. Mason F. Cogswell, who was a practicing physician in Hartford, Conn., at the beginning of this century, had a daughter named Alice, who, from what was then called spotted fever, lost her hearing and speech, when two years old. The case of this dear little girl excited much interest among her father's friends, and one in particular, the Rev. Thos. H. Gallaudet took special pains to aid the father in relieving the dear child. Sympathy for her soon expanded into sympathy for her unfortunate class.

Attention being thus drawn to the subject of educating Deaf Mutes, and no one in America having any practical knowledge of the subject, it was suggested by a few benevolent men in Hartford, to send Mr. Gallaudet to England, to study there the newly-founded Institution

for the Deaf and Dumb, and see what could be done for such in our own country. In 1815, Mr. Gallaudet went to England; but meeting with no favorable reception either in London or Edinburgh, he was induced to go to Paris, and there became acquainted with the Abbé Sicard, then at the head of the French institution. The Abbé Sicard, after devoting thirty years to improving the system of Abbé de l'Epée, had brought the sign language and the manual alphabet to great perfection. At this institution Mr. Gallaudet was placed by the Abbé Sicard under the tutorship of one of his best educated Deaf Mutes, and one of his most esteemed teachers, Laurent Clerc, who gave Mr. Gallaudet private lessons in the sign language, so as to fit him for the post he designed to occupy on his return to America. During one of these private lessons, Mr. Gallaudet proposed to Mr. Clerc that he should go with him to the United States, and aid in setting in motion an Asylum at Hartford. Without any hesitation Mr. Clerc consented.

The two friends landed in New York, in August, 1816, and in April, 1817, the Institution at Hartford was opened with seven pupils. Thus was begun the first Asylum for the education of the Deaf and Dumb, not only in the United States, but in this whole western hemisphere; and the nearly fifty institutions for this class which now are found on this continent, are the outgrowth and fruit of this first effort made by Mr. Gallaudet to teach the little deaf and dumb child, Alice Cogswell, more than sixty years ago.

These two men, Thomas H. Gallaudet, and Laurent Clerc, were the first in this land

“Who strove through Nature’s prisoning walls
The hermit heart to reach;
And, with philosophy divine,
To give the silent,—speech.”

MRS. SIGOURNEY.

Sixty years ago there was not an educated deaf mute in America. Now through the agency of these two men, thousands have not only the rudiments of education, but many have been taught the higher branches of a collegiate course.

In September, 1854, the Deaf and Dumb of the United States, erected at Hartford a befitting monument to Dr. Gallaudet, who had died three years before—“As a testimonial of profound gratitude to their earliest and best friend and benefactor.” At the inauguration of this noble monument, one of the orators of the day truly said: “What the Mute owes to Gallaudet can be more significantly illustrated by one fact, than by an hour’s disquisition. Formerly, the deaf and dumb were, by the presumption of our common law, classed with idiots and lunatics, presumed by this perfection of human reason, to be incapable, from want of sufficient understanding and perception between right and wrong, of any crime. They were of course incapacitated to alien estates—to make a deed, contract, note or will, or from testifying in a court of justice. What a ban was this! Proscribed by universal consent from the rank of human beings, proscribed from all the busi-

ness employments, honors and distinctions of life. When therefore Mr. Gallaudet returned from France he brought to this excommunicated class—not only the manual alphabet (arbitrary signs) and the American Asylum, but a MAGNA CHARTA,—a bill of rights, an act of enfranchisement. We raise columns, arches, statues, and hail as liberators, the men who restore to their fellows political freedom. What meed of praise shall be awarded to him, who, not only emancipated a whole class of men in all states and for all time, from the thrall of ignorance and moral degradation; who not only restored to them their rights invaluable—inestimable—but the *humanity of which they were robbed?*”

“I hope I shall be pardoned,” continues the speaker, “if in this connection I allude to a co-pioneer of Gallaudet in his noble enterprise, his teacher-pupil-friend, a man who left his native France, with motives as pure and for a cause as glorious, as drew his illustrious countryman, La Fayette, to our shores.” He alluded to Laurent Clerc, then living and who then stood beside him after forty years’ faithful service, and of whom the orator, alluding to Mr. Clerc’s deafness, says, “He hears not; would that my voice could break the barred portals of that ear, while it speaks of the gratitude of those you crossed the ocean to bless and save; of the honor and respect of those among whom you dwell, of the love and reverence of those bound to you by dearest ties. Long and late may it be—distant, oh! far distant be the time when we shall assemble here to pay these final honors

to you." Thus spoke the Mayor of Hartford, the Hon. Henry C. Demming, twenty-two years ago. Death now claims both these noble and honored men.

Two years ago, 1874, the Deaf Mutes of America erected, close by the monument to Gallaudet, a memorial bust of his colleague, Laurent Clerc, whom the Abbé Sicard styled "The Apostle of the Deaf Mutes of the new world," and in whom, they acknowledged a sympathizing benefactor "who left his native land to elevate them by his teachings, and encourage them by his example."

By a singular and most marked coincidence, the sons of these two founders of Deaf Mute Education in America, are here to-day, and stand here, as Presbyters of the Protestant Episcopal Church, to take part in the ordination of the first Deaf Mute ever commissioned by our Church to take upon him the office of a Deacon in the Church of God. Worthy sons of noble sires!

If the spirits of the blessed dead are permitted to witness the transactions of earth, methinks that these holy men, who now "rest from their labors," must look with special delight on this scene, as each sees a son—a priest of the Lord—carrying on the work the fathers began, and inaugurating an era in the moral condition of the Deaf Mutes, which may be the means of eternal salvation to thousands of the children of silence.

Having said this much of the past, we come now to the present, and answer the question, Why, as one

never before was ordained a Minister of Christ, do you do it now?

It has been shown, that with rare, and even then doubtful exceptions, until within less than a century, no systematic effort was made on any great scale to teach the deaf and dumb. The invention by the Abbé de l' Epée of the sign language, and the perfection to which that language and the hand alphabet were carried by his successor, the Abbé Sicard, opened new avenues to the long-closed minds of mutes.

The ear has ever been regarded as one of the principal instruments of securing mental development. Aristotle said that of all the senses ministering to the mind's growth and culture, hearing was the chief: and you all know how John Bunyan, the charming dreamer, makes "Ear-gate" one of the most important portals of "the town of Man-soul." But with the ear closed, and the tongue silent, how was the imprisoned mind to be ministered to? How were its powers to be drawn out and cultivated and made the repository of knowledge and religion? It was done by simply taking nature's language of signs, and adapting that language philosophically and dexterously to the necessities of the Deaf Mute. The natural language of mankind is gesture, and pantomime is one of the most expressive forms of communicating facts and ideas.

In addition to the sign language, the manual alphabet, or dactylography, has been carried to such perfection that it is used both rapidly and exactly, to convey informa-

tion on any subject; and the fingers of an educated Mute can spell out words to the eye of another, as rapidly as a pen in the hand of a ready writer can trace them with ink on paper. It is precisely equivalent to *writing*; like it conveying words as *spelled* (not as *pronounced*) to the eye letter by letter. The position of the fingers imitate the shape of the written letters.

“The cunning finger, finely twined,
The subtle thread that knitteth mind to mind;
There that strange bridge of signs was bu.lt, where roll
The sunless waves that sever soul from soul,
And by the Arch, no bigger than a hand,
Truth traveled over to the silent land.”

Yes! *by this bridge of signs* truth has traveled over to the silent land. It has been proved to demonstration that the sign and manual language does convey full and accurate knowledge of Divine truth to the minds of the Deaf and Dumb. It has also been proved that in not a single known instance has an uneducated Deaf Mute had any conception of the existence of a Supreme Being as a Creator and Ruler of the Universe, and as has been well said by an officer of the great London Institution, “No condition of heathen darkness is more deplorable than that of an uneducated Deaf Mute.” The Rev. Dr. Wm. W. Turner, who was for many years at the head of the Hartford Asylum, who has been recognized as the highest authority on such subjects, writes me: “I will only say that on all subjects of a religious or spiritual nature, uneducated Deaf Mutes are wholly ignorant; and that in our Institution by the

medium of sign language, they may be as clearly and fully instructed as other young persons, and are quite as susceptible of saving influences from the truth and spirit of God ”

Our beloved brother now present tells me that his father, Dr. Gallaudet, first conceived the idea of using the sign language in the public worship of God. He began at once to assemble his pupils in the Chapel for services and religious instruction on Sunday, and for daily Morning and Evening Prayers. Many were led along to have an intelligent faith in the Saviour. This plan has been followed in all American Institutions. Furthermore we find that the brother now with us has gone a step further. In the Fall of 1850 he began a Bible Class for adult Deaf Mutes in the vestry room of old St. Stephen's Church, N. Y. The thought was at length put into his mind, ever intent as it was to do something for the spiritual welfare of this class, that in the great city of New York there should be one Church caring specially for Deaf Mutes, and so twenty-four years ago he began “St. Ann's Free Church for Deaf Mutes,” of which he is now the Rector. Not satisfied with this, he established missions to the Deaf Mutes in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Boston, Albany, &c., &c., till at length out of all this work grew, in the Fall of 1872, the incorporated society known as “The Church Mission to Deaf Mutes, with its National Home for the Aged and Infirm Deaf Mutes.”

Few things are more touching than to witness their

silent worship, and mark their eager faces as they drink in, through the eye, the varied truths as they fall, not from speaking lips, but from hands eloquent with expressive gesture; carrying straight to their souls the teachings of their Divine Saviour. It is beautiful to note, how the law of compensation comes in to supplement and overmaster aural and lingual defects; and make more emphatic teaching by the hand and eye, and thus impart double quickness to the perceptive faculties. And as, in building the Temple of Solomon, there was no sound of any tool heard in the house while it was in building, so the living temples in the souls of these Mutes are noiselessly built up by the Holy Ghost, in the solemn silence of a speechless tongue and a closed ear; and in these living temples the Lord is in truth "present," and the earth does indeed "keep *silence* before Him."

It being established, then, that the Deaf Mute is, in an uneducated state, utterly ignorant of God; that he can be taught the truths of revelation; that this knowledge can be imparted to him by the manual alphabet and sign language; the next question is, who shall minister to this class? There are over 20,000 Deaf Mutes in the United States. There are several hundred in this city. To leave their instruction solely to those who can speak but who have learned the finger and sign language, would be to limit them to a very few teachers. It has been stated on the very highest authority that there are only three or four clergymen in all England who

could administer consolation and the Holy Communion to the Deaf and Dumb; and in this country very few of our clergy are skilled in Dactylography.

In the Providence of God, there has been presented to us a Deaf Mute, one of their own class, whom, after due examination, we received as a candidate for Holy Orders, with full qualifications, and who will, shortly in your presence be admitted to the Diaconate.

But you may ask, as others have done, Does not the Bible forbid such a thing? I answer, No. There are certain defects or blemishes set down in the 21st chapter of Leviticus, which if a man had he was not to approach to offer sacrifices, here called the "Bread of God." But among the twelve things named as disqualifications for the Priestly office under the Jewish economy, deafness and dumbness are not named. Blindness is specified—even a cataract of the eye is mentioned—lameness is mentioned, imperfect hands and feet are stated, but the loss of hearing and speech is not recorded. We find furthermore that St. Luke tells us that Zacharias, a Priest of the course of Abia, after he was smitten speechless, did not cease to officiate because he was dumb, and depart at once to his own house, but he remained serving in the Temple "until the days of his ministration were ended." So that, while there is no specific mention of this misfortune as a disqualification for ministerial service; a case is recorded, miraculous indeed, but none the less instructive, where a Priest who was dumb did continue to minister in his office in the Temple of God.

Others have asked, Do not the Ancient Canons forbid such an Ordination? Again I answer, No. The only one of the Canons of the early Councils which at all speaks of this class is the 78th of the Primitive Canons, commonly called "Apostolical." This says, "If one is totally deaf or blind let him not be made a Bishop; not that he is thus defiled, but that the affairs of the Church may not be hindered;" or, as Bingham translates the last clause, "because he will not be able to perform the duties of his function." Passing by for the present, the question as to the authority of these Canons, which, according to the learned Hefele, were composed in the 4th and 5th centuries, and are hardly more than repetitions and variations of the decrees of the Synods of that period, particularly of the Synod of Antioch, 341; permit me to say, that if it be contended that this Canon which is confessedly of unknown origin, be authoritative, it only declares that a deaf man "shall not be made *a Bishop*;" i. e. he shall not be a chief Pastor having Diocesan jurisdiction. As this is the only Canon either of the Ante-Nicene or Post-Nicene Councils which at all bears upon the case, and as no other has been enacted by any Provincial Synod or Ecumenical Council, we reach the conclusion that there is no *Canonical* bar to the ordination of the candidate before us.

But it has been said that a Deaf Mute cannot be ordained because he cannot read aloud as required by the Canon. In the first place, I would remark that

our Canons and Rubrics contemplate a speaking clergy and hearing congregations; and as no case requiring any other conditions had ever occurred, hence no provision had been specially made to meet such a case as this. But the requirement "in the art of reading aloud," spoken of in Section V. Canon 2, Title 1 of the Digest, is one simply to test his abilities, so as to "justify the expectation of his usefulness in the office of a Deacon," as the same Canon recites. But if the office of a Deacon is to be exercised in a congregation *which cannot hear*, then "the art of reading aloud" is not needed, and could be of no use; while the underlying principle of the Canon, that the Deacon should show his ability to communicate his Divine message to the intellect and conscience of the people, *in such a manner as that the people to whom he ministers shall most readily receive and understand it*, is fully complied with when the Deacon can so minister before the congregation in a language understood by the people, as that the people shall be edified thereby. This is precisely the case here. The people to whom this Deacon will officiate can, as a congregation, be ministered to *only through the sign language*; and the Deacon to be commissioned will discharge his duties to them *only through that sign language* when he ministereth in the congregation.

But it has further been objected that this is a dangerous precedent. It will be a sufficient reply to this, to say, that up to this time we have no facts to war-

rant such an assertion, and that the restrictions and limitations surrounding this case are such as to make it impossible to be abused as a precedent dangerous to the peace or purity of the Church. Hence we dismiss this objection, as being neither founded on any known fact, nor justified by a due regard to the circumstances of the special case before us. When it becomes necessary to hoist the danger signal, the Church will heed the warning and provide for her safety.

It has been further objected that no one could judge of the Preaching of a Deaf Mute, whether it was churchly and scriptural. The answer to this is, that the guarantee is found in the years of preliminary study, training and examinations to which this candidate has been subjected; together with the daily tenor of his Christian life since his confirmation. These are all the guarantees we ask in any case, before we admit a man as a Deacon. The door of entrance is just as much guarded in this case, as in the case of a speaking Deacon, and every safeguard which the Church requires for her speaking clergy, is required and fulfilled here.

If it be said that afterward, there is no way of judging of the Preaching of the Deaf Mute, whether it be churchly and orthodox, because the great body of the people cannot understand the sign language; I answer that the same objection holds to our Missionaries in foreign lands, preaching in Greek or Chinese or Japanese. The Church having tried these men, commissions them

with a trustful heart, and leaves the responsibility of rightly discharging their duty upon their own souls before God.

As then we find neither the Word of God, nor the Canons of the Church, are against such an act; we proceed to ask, what are the reasons why we should proceed in this particular ordination? We do so, first, because the sign language and the hand alphabet, the means used in addressing the Deaf, addressed exclusively to the eye, are as much entitled to be considered true and proper vehicles of thought as oral speech to hearing ears.

Sir Wm. Hamilton has shown, that the dictum of Aristotle, which so long exercised a powerful sway against the educating of Deaf Mutes, viz.: "that of all the senses, hearing contributes most to intelligence and knowledge," was qualified by him by the proposition that this was only by accident, "inasmuch as hearing is the sense of sound, and sound contingently the vehicle of thought." But may we not use this same proposition with a slight change in phraseology, and say in reference to the sign language, that *seeing* is the sense of discerning signs, and for the Deaf Mute *signs* become contingently the vehicle of thought? If this can be logically affirmed, then has not the *sign* speaker as much right to minister in the sacred things to *sign* *discerners*, as the *voice* speaker to minister to *voice* *hearers*? May not the eye be educated to catch signs as quickly as the ear to catch sounds? May not the

hand, the wondrous and complex mechanism of which is beyond description, be as nimble and prompt a servitor of thought, as the tongue is of words? And may not the eye be taught to read from the flexible fingers as easily as from the printed page?

We believe that this can be done, nay, to a certain extent, has been done. No one can mark the rapidity by which thoughts are exchanged between educated Deaf Mutes, even upon abstruse and scientific subjects, without being convinced that this is indeed a language of force, compass and flexibility, adequate to the necessities of the case; and though to us, who speak, this is as a foreign language, yet to them, the sign language is virtually their vernacular, and is capable of conveying full religious truth to the mind and heart of the class for whom it is designed.

When, therefore, we find a man truly prepared, spiritually and intellectually, to minister to this peculiar people, in their own special mode of inter-communication, we feel that we are but following the leadings of God's Providence in setting him apart for that high and holy work. Such a man taken from their own ranks will teach them the practical reality of our sympathy with them, and our desire for their mental and moral advancement, more forcibly than anything else could do. Such a man, one of themselves, consecrating himself to this work, will make them feel that they are not shut out altogether from the sacred ministry; that the Church does not bar its doors to all such un-

fortunate ones; but that it is ready to commission even these, whenever proper opportunity and due qualification meet, to carry the rich provisions of the Gospel to their fellow Mutes, and thus cause the ears of their souls to hear, as it were, Jesus' voice saying EPHPHATHA, be opened; and lo! the Gospel enters into their minds, and moulds and sanctifies their lives.

But, secondly, we proceed to this Ordination, because of the singular fitness and qualifications of this candidate for the office and work which is to be conferred on him.

It is not usual to speak of the qualifications of Candidates for Holy Orders in Ordination Sermons, but in the present case, it is due to the Church and to the public to know the leading circumstances connected with this Ordination, so that they may be assured that all things have been done not only "decently and in order," but wisely and prudently and in the fear of God. Hence we must make an exception to the general rule, and say a few words to this audience concerning the touching history of the Candidate now before you.

When Bishop McIlvaine was in England, in 1835, pleading for the College and Seminary in his Diocese of Ohio, he sought to secure for it not only means but men; money to erect buildings and endow Professorships, and Students to go there, and on the spot, prepare themselves for what was then frontier Missionary work. In the Parish of the Rev. Thomas Mortimer, an eminent Clergyman of the Church of England, in Penton-

ville, near London, were four young men " who offered themselves willingly to the Lord," for this work. Circumstances prevented three of them from going but one, the youngest of these, whom Mr. Mortimer called "choice young men," crossed the Atlantic, followed Bishop McIlvaine to Gambier, and entered Kenyon College, in order to fit himself for the Ministry of the Church; this was in the fall of 1835. The young Englishman pursued his studies satisfactorily, and in due time was admitted to Holy Orders. He soon caught the Missionary spirit and sought work in the Missionary field in China, and is now the Rev. Edward William Syle, D.D., Professor of History and Natural Philosophy in the Imperial University of Japan.

The Candidate before you is the son of this clergyman, and was born in China nearly 30 years ago. He had the use of the organs of hearing until at 6 years of age, disease deprived him of hearing, and the loss of voice gradually followed. He received a thorough education, as far as it could then be given, in the Family School of Mr. D. E. Bartlett, at Poughkeepsie, N. Y., and he remained in Professor Bartlett's family after the removal of the Professor to Hartford. Mr. Syle was under the special instruction of Mrs. Bartlett, a lady of singular talent and scholarship, as well as of most lovely character, and by whom young Syle was prepared for College. Her name deserves to be recorded as one who guided the opening mind, and directed the preliminary studies of the first Deaf Mute Clergyman in the world.

The Rev. Wm. W. Turner, Ph.D., who was Principal of the American Asylum at Hartford when young Syle was at school and college in that city, writes me: "Our recollections of Mr. Syle are all very pleasant and favorable as to his fitness for the sacred office he is about to assume. I have no doubt as to his fidelity and usefulness in the duties resulting from it."

But this amount of instruction did not satisfy Mr. Syle. He wanted to acquire a full collegiate education, and accordingly he entered the Freshman class of Trinity College, Hartford, in 1863.

In June, 1864, he passed the Annual Examinations with such high mark as to be admitted to the further examination for honors, and passed the latter "*cum honore*" in Latin and English. In December of that year, continued inflammation of the eyes made his physician declare it necessary that he should suspend study for a long time; and he left Trinity College with an honorable dismissal from the President, now Bishop Kerfoot, of Pittsburgh.

Undaunted by this affliction, we find him in July, 1867, in Cambridge, England, and in October of that year he entered St. John's College in that old University. At the Annual Examination in June, 1868, he was sixth in the first class of nearly a hundred, although in poor health; and was also awarded one of the "Exhibitions," founded by Sir Ralph Hare. In the Michaelmas Term of that year, illness, culminating in congestion of the brain, made it unsafe to continue

reading for honors in mathematics as he was then doing, under the tuition of the Rev. Percival Frost, one of the most eminent mathematicians in the University ; and in February, 1869, he returned to the United States, being offered a Professorship in the New York Institution for the Deaf and Dumb. While occupying this position, with returning health, he immediately made a bold and vigorous effort for a degree, and finding that the course of study at Yale College corresponded most nearly with what had been his line of reading, he applied to President Woolsey, and was admitted by the Faculty to examination for a degree. He was accordingly examined in June and July, 1869, in the studies of each of the four classes, viz., the Freshman, Sophomore, Junior and Senior, attending the regular annual examinations in most subjects, and being especially examined in Latin, by Prof. Thatcher; in Greek, by Prof. Hadley; in Political Science, by President Woolsey, and in Moral and Intellectual Philosophy, by Dr. (now President) Porter. Such was his marked proficiency that the Faculty unanimously admitted him to the Degree of Bachelor of Arts with the graduating class of 1869, and he procured M.A. in course in 1872 ; while Trinity admitted him "M.A." *ad eundem* in 1875. He was for several years Professor of Chemistry and Physics in the New York Institution for Deaf and Dumb; and now, in consequence of his familiar knowledge of the French, German and Italian languages, is the Foreign Editor of

“The Deaf Mute’s Journal,” giving translations from foreign papers, published for the reading of the deaf and dumb, or professionally discussing their education.

What an heroic effort was this to secure the prize of a high education! what perseverance! what energy! what self-sacrifice! what singleness of eye did he manifest in all these years of trial and of discipline! When you consider the obstacles in his way, the lack of speech and hearing, and the added difficulties arising from delicate and frequently declining health, and then mark what he has succeeded in accomplishing; have we not a guarantee of a high and noble character and of great and useful faculties of mind and heart?

But better than all this, he is a true and humble believer in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He was confirmed by Bishop Horatio Potter in 1858, at the age of eleven years, and since then he has considered himself consecrated to Christ’s service. His heart has long desired to be useful to his fellow Mutes, and he has striven in various ways, as a Bible Class Teacher and Lecturer, to instruct them in the principles and practices of our Holy Religion.

After much watching and waiting and praying, the door of Hope seemed to open before him and he was admitted over fifteen months ago as a candidate for Holy Orders in this Diocese. Gifted with strong mental powers; enriched with culture in the arts, the sciences and the classics; endowed with sturdy moral qualities, and with a heart kindled into love for his

dear Lord, he stands before us to-day an object at once of sincere admiration for what he has done, and of sincere sympathy for his sad affliction.

How ought we to rejoice that the religion of Him who only can say to the deaf ear "Ephphatha," has by means of effective instrumentalities, been able virtually to unstopp the ear of the deaf and loose the tongue of the dumb, and make them to receive and believe and love Him who first by precept and example, cared for, and blessed, this unfortunate class!

We cannot enough thank God for opening this channel of intercourse between these and their God and Saviour; enabling them to apprehend spiritual truth and to drink in with real delight the comfort and hopes of Revelation.

How ought we to rejoice that our beloved Church has manifested such care for and oversight of these Deaf Mutes as to establish for them special services, where they can use our Liturgy and participate in all our spiritual privileges! Our Prayer Book is an in. valuable blessing to them as a medium of worship. Once taught to read, with this book in their hands they can enter into our courts, and join in all parts of the service, as it moves on from opening sentence through humble confession, and penitent prayer, and ancient psalter, and noble Te Deum, and Collect, and Lesson, and Creed, and Commandments, and Epistle, and Gospel, to the Benediction. They can hear, indeed no responsive words from the people; they catch

no melodious sound as it issues from the choir, the organ, or the great congregation ; they lose all the jubilant strains of vocal music ; but, if they can hear no tone striking in sweet harmony on the outward ear, they can with the spirit and understanding "make melody in their hearts to the Lord," and so they can worship with us in all the fullness of our service and "in the beauty of holiness."

Here permit me to express for myself, and in behalf of the Deaf Mutes, our sincere thanks to the Rector, Wardens and Vestry of this Church in which we are assembled, for the long continued and nursing care which they have extended to this class, by giving them so freely the use of the Church and their Chapel for their public and other services.

Cordially has the Rector entered into all the efforts now being made for the spiritual welfare of these people, and God's blessing will surely rest upon a Church which so effectually ministers to Christ, when it ministers to Christ's afflicted ones in the person of the Deaf and Dumb.

In the presence of the sons of the two Founders of the Education of Deaf Mutes on this Continent, let me ask you to regard with increased benevolence those Institutions, which now number nearly fifty Asylums, and which have given instruction to thousands. Let me ask you in the presence of him, who under God first carried out the idea of establishing a special Church in connection with our own for the special

benefit of this class ; to sustain, with true, generous liberality, all efforts made to bring our Church in more living and practical contact with the Deaf and Dumb, that it may be one of the Saviour's hands holding forth to them the Word of Life and the Sacraments of His own Institution. And finally, let me ask you in the presence of this Dear Brother, now to be ordained Deacon, to give him your moral, as well as benevolent support, in the work in which he is soon to engage. It is a mission field lying at your own doors. It blends strongly the domestic and the foreign elements in one. The domestic, in that the subjects of it live in our midst ; the foreign, in that they speak not our speech, and know not our tongue, and are to us as foreigners in their modes of intercommunication.

It is a mission which should appeal to every parent's heart. To those whose children have perfect organs of speech and hearing, as a cause of thanksgiving to God for such blessings ; and as exciting a desire to help those who have them not. To those who have in their households some child of silence, as offering to such a way and means whereby the mind and heart of the Mute may be opened to hear the Saviour's voice, and feel the Saviour's love. And who knows, but that in the future, this affliction may cross your own threshold, and climb up into your own chamber, in the form of some bright boy whom disease may rob of hearing ; or some darling girl who, like little Alice Cogswell, shall suddenly be bereft of speech, and then when the sad

reality breaks upon you, find the two most important organs of your child fast locked, beyond the power of human skill to open ! O then, in that hour of almost wild despair at their deprivation of speech and hearing, shall you learn the blessedness of the power of this mission work, to mitigate a disaster, the evil of which we cannot conceive ; and the trials of which, can no speaking tongue declare.

Above all, brethren, pray for this man of God now to be commissioned and sent forth. Pray that he may be thoroughly furnished unto every good work ; that he may be wise to win souls ; that he may be “approved of God a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

Pray that a door of access may be opened to him to the class of people among whom he is to labor ; that through the presentation of the Saviour’s words he may be able to say to the deaf ear of the soul, “Ephphatha,” —be opened—opened to hear the voice of the Holy Ghost, opened to enjoy in the unspoken language of the spirit, the praises of God ; so that finally he who ministers to them, and they to whom he ministers, may at last meet together where, freed from all physical impediment, restored to clearness of hearing, and fullness of speech, with spiritual bodies defective in no part, and perfect in all, they shall hear the plaudit of their loving Saviour, “Come, ye blessed of my Father,” and sing with faultless tongues, the new song, sung by the Redeemed in glory.

